



GEMA BHAKTI - Page - 16

Lt. Col. Katherine Kalama, Hawaii Army National Guard, and a team of military planners from the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) and the Hawaii National Guard discuss the center of gravity assessments for the exercise scenario during the operational design workshop of Exercise GEMA BHAKTI, Sept 18, 2021, Jakarta Indonesia. The operational design workshop in the precursor exercise for Exercise GEMA BHAKTI and is facilitated by the Hawaii National Guard with the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) as a part of the State Partnership Program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

## Hawaii National Guard Renews Relationship with Indonesia with GEMA BHAKTI Workshop

State of Hawaii, Department of Defense, Public Affairs Office | Story by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson | Monday, September 20, 2021

A team of military planners from the Hawaii National Guard (HING) kicked off an operational design workshop with the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) in Jakarta, Indonesia on September 16, 2021. The workshop is the precursor for Exercise GEMA BHAKTI, a peace operation and humanitarian assistance exercise, which will commence on September 21, 2021. The HING facilitates the workshop as a part of the State Partnership Program (SPP). This is the first face-to-face SPP exchange between the TNI and HING since late 2019 due to the COVID Pandemic. USINDOPACOM service components are also participating in this year's workshop.

"The HING has ongoing relationship with the TNI," said Lt. Col. David Hosea, HING Military planner. "Building this relationship, sharing experiences, and training alongside our

partners, helps maintain security and stability in the Pacific."

The HING is state a partner with Indonesia and regularly held combined exercises and events to increase the depth of that relationship before the pandemic. This is the fourth year Hawaii and Indonesia have participated in an operational design seminar. The 2020 edition was executed virtually.

Operational design is a process where a committee of military members, and sometimes members of government, examine very complex problems to help define variables, goals, tension points, and a desired end-state to aid in the planning and execution of military or governmental action. The process is a key first step in military planning

that requires committees of personnel from diverse backgrounds that want to understand complex socio-political problems and make recommendations on a desired end-state or develop an operational approach. Once the scenario is framed, analyzed, and debated then lines of effort are proposed. The lines of effort define the actions needed to move a situation from the current state to the desired state, and

**"Building this relationship, sharing experiences, and training alongside our partners, helps maintain security and stability in the Pacific."**

*Lt. Col. David Hosea, HING Military planner.*

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Sgt. Ryan Langas and Spc. Kadie Hoopai, medics with the Hawaii National Guard Joint Task Force, Task Force Medical prepare to receive and register members of the community for COVID-19 testing on August 25, 2021, at the Honolulu Police Department's Chinatown Substation. A team of medical specialists conducted more than 1,400 COVID tests in the Chinatown historic district in Honolulu. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Anyah Peatross)



Staff Sgt. William Ham, an Army medic from the Hawaii National Guard Joint Task Force, Task Force Medical poses in front of the Honolulu Police Department's Chinatown Substation in Honolulu, Hawaii, September 28, 2021. For more than two months, Ham and his team of medical specialists offered free rapid COVID testing in the historic Chinatown district. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Anyah Peatross)

## Hawaii National Guard COVID test in historic district of Honolulu

State of Hawaii, Department of Defense, Public Affairs Office | Story by 1st Lt. Anyah Peatross | Tuesday, September 28, 2021

For more than two months, a team from the Hawaii National Guard Joint Task Force, Task Force Medical (TF Med) have performed more than 1,400 COVID-19 swab tests since July through September at the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) Substation location in the Chinatown Historic District of downtown Honolulu, Hawaii.

Chinatown is one of the oldest towns in Hawaii and in the United States. In 1900, flea-infested rats from disembarking ships likely caused the spread of the bubonic plague in Chinatown. More than a century after the plague decimated the area, a revitalized Chinatown faces renewed hardships as residents and businesses work together to end the COVID-19 crisis.

Staff Sgt. Class William Ham, an Army medic assigned to TF Med, is the senior non-commissioned officer in charge of testing operations at the substation. On site, Ham supports and assists the military-trained medical specialists who provide rapid COVID testing.

"Working in Chinatown opens up a whole new

mindset on just how much our communities are in need of support," Ham said.

The town's one-way streets and tightly packed infrastructure have not hindered people from finding the testing site. During peak hours, the line for testing could be seen poking out from the alley wrapping around the front of the police substation. Patients that have been tested received their results in less than 30 minutes.

In addition to monitoring the well-being of his team, Ham also keeps an eye on those waiting in line.

"Patients are generally pleased with the testing we conduct," said Ham. "Testing is quick. Patients receive their results within minutes, with many fitting their COVID test into their busy schedules."

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) Disease Outbreak Control Division reported that from mid-July through Aug. the statewide 7-day average for COVID positive cases reached into the triple digits week after week. Ham ensured that within the hours of

operation they had enough test kits to meet the demand for testing.

"The daily tests being performed have significantly increased due to the surge of positive patients throughout the island," said Ham. "We average about 120 to 150 tests a day."

TF Med provided assistance to DOH and other state agencies at multiple venues across the island of O'ahu, including prisons, healthcare centers, public schools, the Honolulu Zoo, and the Aloha Stadium. At each site, TF Med provided one or more services such as administrative, COVID testing, and inoculation support.

The pandemic has revealed Hawaii's strong community values, with many willing to come together to do their part to protect themselves and others from the virus.

"It is a very humbling experience to be working alongside the DOH and HPD," Ham said. "It's great to see the community being proactive and showing concern for COVID-19."



## Hawaii ANG fighter pilots claim top honors with Winston P. Wilson Trophy

154th Wing Public Affairs - Hawaii Air National Guard  
| Story by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier | Wednesday, September 29, 2021

A Hawaii Air National Guard fighter squadron was recently recognized as one of the Air National Guard's most outstanding flying units after receiving the Winston P. Wilson Trophy for the year of 2021.

The 199th Fighter Squadron was presented the award on behalf of the National Guard Association of the U.S., setting the unit apart among more than 30 other flying squadrons equipped with fighter and reconnaissance aircraft.

The prestigious award is bestowed annually to recognize top-performing units, based on overall effectiveness during exercises, deployments, inspection results, accident prevention and many other significant contributions.

Maj. Gen. Winston P. Wilson, who the trophy is named after, served as the Chief, National Guard Bureau from 1963 through 1971. He was the first Air Force officer to hold the position.

At Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, 199th FS pilots are better known as the 'Hawaiian Raptors,' sharing the title and F-22 mission with active-duty aviators from the 19th FS. As a Total-Force Team, the Hawaiian Raptors are the only guard-led Raptor unit in the world, with the 199th FS being the lead in the active associate.

"This is just another proud moment for the Hawaiian Raptors and it shows exactly what we set out to achieve -- being the best in our nation during this critical time and making sure that we're always ready to go," said Lt. Col. Kevin Horton, 199th FS commander. "Arriving at this point means excellence on every front, and we clearly have the right people who are standing up to make it happen."

According to Horton, the 'secret sauce' to his squadron's success is based on the Hawaiian Raptor cadre's excess of experience and resourcefulness combined with their unparalleled support from aircraft maintenance specialists.

"What we have different in the Hawaiian Raptors is our experience," said Horton. "But when you tie that in with the high performers on the maintenance side, based on their dedication to the mission, and you get a lethal combination of both ability and

**"What we have different in the Hawaiian Raptors is our experience. But when you tie that in with the high performers on the maintenance side, based on their dedication to the mission, and you get a lethal combination of both ability and availability, which makes all the difference in a fight tonight scenario."**

*Lt. Col. Kevin Horton, 199th FS commander.*

availability, which makes all the difference in a fight tonight scenario."

Members of the 199th FS have provided a nonstop watch over the Pacific skies since the alert mission was established in 1958, prior to Hawaii receiving its statehood. All pilots and ground personnel involved provide some of the nation's primary defense measures to intercept any aircraft that poses a threat within the world's most isolated area of operation.

With approximately 27 Total Force instructor pilots who operate inseparably, Horton said that the Hawaiian Raptors specializes in passing on their decades of flying experience

Fighter operations at JBPB-H focus on more than just training pilots to be the best possible warfighters. The Hawaiian Raptors maintain a unique alert posture on a 24/7 basis, with standby aircrews who are permanently stationed at an

with Airmen from the ANG and active-duty Air Force.

"Our Total Force partners are crucial in the sense that they provide a lot of the initiative and new blood and who arrive here during their first assignment, and with Hawaiian Raptor's highly experienced cadre, they become instructor pilots really quickly," said Horton, "so we're able to generate first assignment instructor pilots at a relatively fast pace, which overall helps the nation's readiness."

It's not uncommon for squadron pilots to pass the 1,000-flying-hour mark, a career milestone that few achieve in the fighter community.

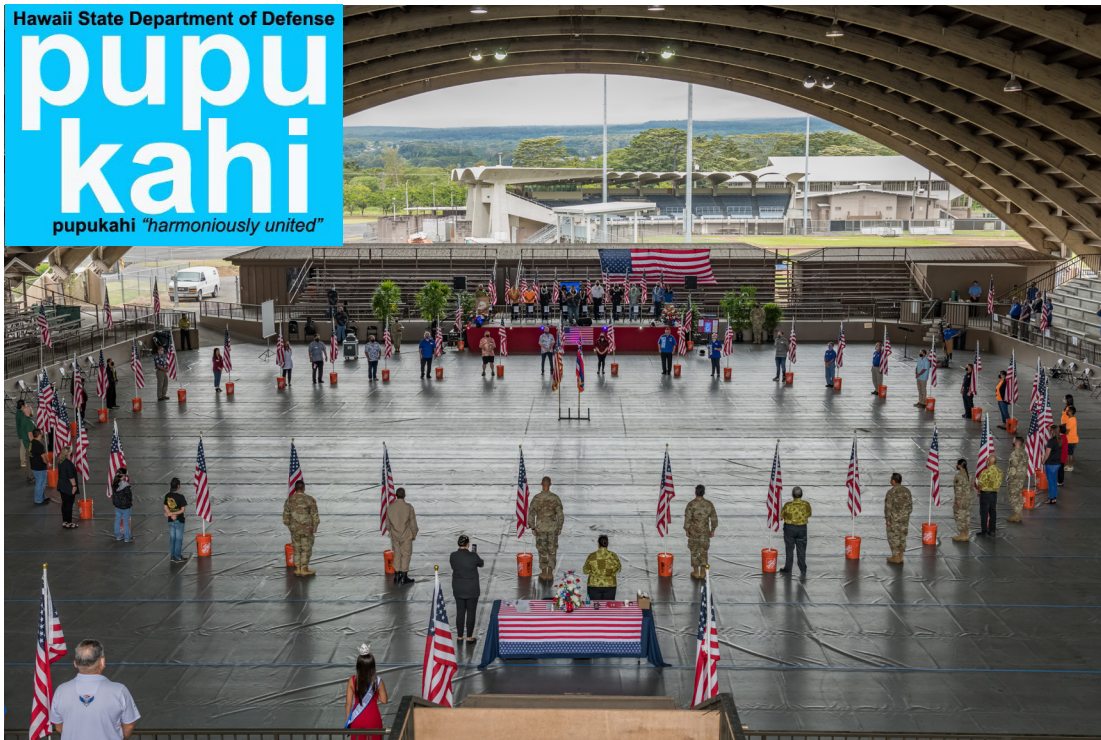
In alignment with the unit's high-level award, a 199th FS member, who goes by call sign 'Baha,' was recently awarded by the National Guard Bureau the prestigious Lance P. Sijan Award for the year 2021. The award recognizes the highest qualities of leadership in the performance of their duties and the conduct of their lives. Baha will progress further as a nominee and compete for the same award amongst pilots across all Air Force components.

"Baha's independent leadership is the characteristic are we are trying to develop and replicate," said Horton, "he is living the 'Accelerate Change or Lose' evolution General Brown so often speaks about, using boldness and initiative to make good things happen at his level."



The Winston P. Wilson Trophy for 2021 is displayed at the Hawaii Air National Guard's 199th Fighter Squadron on Sept. 28, 2021, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. The 199th FS was recognized on behalf of the National Guard Association of the U.S., setting the unit apart from more than 30 other flying squadrons equipped with fighter and reconnaissance aircraft. The trophy is bestowed annually to recognize top-performing units, based on overall effectiveness during exercises, deployments, inspection results, accident prevention and many other significant contributions. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier)





<- Essential workers, Hawaii National Guard members, and special guests stand in a 'Circle of Hope' before the playing of the National Anthem and Hawaii Pono i, in the Edith Kanakaole Stadium, July 5, 2021, Hilo Hawaii. The special ceremony was to thank the National Guard, Hawaii Police Department, Hawaii Fire Department, Hawaii County Civil Defense, Department of Health, and first responders for their continued commitment and effort in the fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic in the County of Hawaii. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. John Schoebel)



<- Brig. Gen. Moses Kaiwi Jr., Joint Task Force commander, Hawaii National Guard speaks at the Exchange Club of Hilo's "Circle of Hope – Healing Field" ceremony at the Edith Kanakaole Stadium, July 5, 2021, Hilo, Hawaii. The special ceremony was to thank the National Guard, Hawaii Police Department, Hawaii Fire Department, Hawaii County Civil Defense, Department of Health, and first responders for their continued commitment and effort in the fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic in the County of Hawaii. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. John Schoebel)

↑ Former Hawaii County Mayor Harry Kim provides his thankful remarks directed towards Brig. Gen. Moses Kaiwi Jr., Joint Task Force commander, Hawaii National Guard during the Exchange Club of Hilo's "Circle of Hope – Healing Field" ceremony at the Edith Kanakaole Stadium, July 5, 2021, Hilo, Hawaii. The special ceremony was to thank the National Guard, Hawaii Police Department, Hawaii Fire Department, Hawaii County Civil Defense, Department of Health, and first responders for their continued commitment and effort in the fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic in the County of Hawaii. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. John Schoebel)





## Hawaii Air National Guard pilot flew C-17 into Kabul as part of historic evacuation

*Courtesy - William Cole - Honolulu Star Advertiser*

As Taliban fighters swept into Afghanistan's capital on Aug. 15, taking control of the war-torn country, Hawaii Air National Guard 1st Lt. Collin Chow Hoy was co-piloting a C-17 cargo aircraft into Kabul airport.

Onboard were a couple dozen soldiers with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, and two "Little Bird" and two Black Hawk helicopters for the buildup of American troops that helped with the massive evacuation effort.

News agency Reuters reported at the time that the Taliban were coming "from all sides." Gunfire could be heard around the city.

"To be honest, there was very little time to be worried," Chow Hoy recalled of his C-17 Globemaster III's early arrival at the last bastion of U.S. presence in Afghanistan.

"It's one of those things where you can reflect on it later," he said. "You just try your best to compartmentalize things during the job because if your mind is elsewhere, your focus starts to shift away from what you have to do during the moment, right?"

But there were distractions that couldn't be ignored.

Before the big jet could land, the crew got word that a couple of Taliban pilots had landed a Cessna Caravan on the single Kabul runway — and then left it there in an attempt to shut down airfield operations.

Chow Hoy's C-17 ended up "having to hold out in the mountains, and I was uncomfortable because the Taliban people, they are mountainous people, and you have no idea where they are," he said.

Rockets or other munitions fired at the airport subsequently delayed the takeoff of the C-17, which was now on a low-fuel warning, before it lifted off with 54 U.S. embassy staff.

It was the first of two flight missions into Kabul for Chow Hoy. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin later said the evacuation "was the largest airlift conducted in U.S. history — executed in just 17 days."

The plan was to evacuate 70,000 to 80,000 people. More than 124,000 were brought out, Austin said in prepared remarks ahead of last week's Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the end of military operations in Afghanistan.

Austin said military aircraft flew more than 387 sorties, averaging nearly 23 a day. At the height of the operation, an aircraft was taking off every 45 minutes.

"Was it perfect? Of course not," Austin said, noting, "In the span of two days, from Aug. 13 to 15, we went from working alongside a democratically elected, longtime partner government to coordinating warily with a longtime enemy."

### A chaotic scene

A Honolulu resident and member of the Hawaii Air National Guard since 2015, Chow Hoy had volunteered for a Germany assignment flying Europe missions out of Ramstein Air Base. That quickly changed to helping with the Afghanistan evacuation alongside an active duty Air Force crew. The C-17 he piloted was out of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey.

He was in the mix of the first C-17s arriving for the evacuation and had flown into Bagram Air Base before, but never Kabul.

Chow Hoy, who graduated from St. Louis School and Oregon State University, described a chaotic scene on the ground and in the air.

"We had civilian airliners rushing to get out of there," he said. "We had, it looked like, 20 to 30 helicopters at once coming in and coming out and offloading the embassy personnel. We had C-17s that were offloading their cargo and on-loading their cargo. We had the Afghan National Army flying their Apaches (helicopters) for air cover. It kind of looked like something out of a zombie movie, to be honest. That's the only way I can really describe it."

His C-17's "traffic collision avoidance system" went off because of the proximity. "We had to keep an eye out. So the biggest threats came from perhaps being shot at to a mid-air collision. That's what it turned into," the 30-year-old pilot said.

The Taliban broke through Kabul's defenses about 45 minutes after Chow Hoy's C-17 landed, and big plumes of smoke could be seen around the city.

The next day would bring the alarming video of Afghan civilians running on the airfield alongside a departing C-17 with some clinging to the cargo carrier and falling off after it took off.

After about three hours on the ground on Aug. 15, Chow Hoy's C-17 had an "insufficient fuel message" as it prepared to take off with embassy personnel. There were delays with manifests and air traffic. Incoming rockets or other munitions caused the single military air traffic controller wrangling all the aircraft on the big airfield to briefly halt all departures.

"The controller, he's freaking out over the radio, and we were like, oh gosh, we really didn't see anything, but due to all that, we burned a lot of gas sitting on the ground at idle," said Chow Hoy, who is with the 204th Airlift Squadron in Hawaii.

When the C-17 did take off, it couldn't fly at normal cruise speed. "We had to kind of slow it down," he said, and the four-engine jet landed safely at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

The second flight in on Aug. 17 saw the delivery of about 120 fully combat-loaded 82nd Airborne soldiers with pallets of ammunition and Meals Ready to Eat — but the big plane flew out empty, Chow Hoy said.

This was after the Taliban had taken control of one side of the airport, and from "all the videos that everybody saw (of) all the people rushing the airport, they were all crammed into the terminal there, and it took forever to get all of them searched, which is why, unfortunately, it was us and another C-17 that flew out completely empty."

### Proud to serve

Pacific Air Forces in late August said a C-17 aircrew, made up of 15th Wing active-duty at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and 154th Wing Hawaii Air National Guard airmen, had assisted with multiple evacuation missions from Ramstein Air Base, but provided no details.

Chow Hoy said that as a Guardsman, "I'm extremely proud" to have been a part of the Afghanistan airlift and evacuation. "I can remember, I was in fourth grade when 9/11 happened. All of us will never forget that day. I would never have imagined in my life I would take part in the closing of the conflict."

He also wants to "put that weekend warrior joke to rest" because, even though most Guard personnel come in for duty one weekend a month, "we do the job just as well, if not better, and I hope this is a testament to whenever the time it is to do (our) job, we do it and we do it exceptionally well."







A Hawaii Air National Guard F-22 Raptor flies in formation with a French Air and Space Force F3-R Rafale June 30, 2021, near Oahu, Hawaii. FASF aircraft, maintenance, and support personnel traveled to Hawaii for exercise Wakea, as part of the bilateral cooperation in the Pacific between the United States and France. During Wakea, Hawaii ANG F-22 Raptors trained with FASF aircraft to enhance air-combat expertise and interoperability between the two countries' aircraft. In a unique association, the F-22s and the air defense mission at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam are assigned to the 154th Wing, Hawaii Air National Guard. Collectively known as the Hawaiian Raptors, the Hawaii ANG 199th Fighter Squadron and active duty 19th Fighter Squadron serve together under the Air National Guard-led active-associate construct to execute their mission sets. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Orlando Corpuz)

## Hawaiian Raptors advance interoperability with French Air Force

154th Wing Public Affairs - Hawaii Air National Guard | Story by Staff Sgt. Orlando Corpuz | Thursday, July 8, 2021

F-22 Raptors from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam completed international air-combat training July 5, with several training sorties focusing on interoperability between U.S. and French Air Force combat aircraft.

From June 27 to July 5, three French Air Force Rafales, two A400M Atlas, one A330 Phenix, and approximately 170 French Air and Space Force (FASF) personnel made Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, their temporary roost. All part of Exercise Wakea - a PACAF and French co-led demonstration of the U.S. and French Air Force's partnership and commitment in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility.

Part of Wakea involved Hawaii ANG F-22 Raptors training with FASF aircraft to enhance air-combat expertise and increase the interoperability between the two countries' aircraft.

"Wakea provided our F-22 pilots with a unique opportunity to integrate and train with allied partners," said Lt. Col. Anthony Davis, 154th Operations Group deputy commander. "Our location in the Pacific doesn't lend itself to routinely training with French forces, so it will likely prove to be invaluable to future operations and interoperability."

For the Rafale, this was the first time the FASF's primary fighter aircraft had graced the Hawaiian airspace. The deployment was part of France's effort to reaffirm its place as a stabilizing presence in the Pacific.

France's air force and navy began using the Rafales in 2001. The highly versatile twin-engine fighters can be used to execute a multitude of mission sets; from alert and air-defense, ground support, and reconnaissance.

And as the Hawaiian Raptors and Rafales demonstrated, are able to 'play nicely' in the realm of fighter synchronization.

While air-combat synchronization was one of the primary focuses during Wakea, on-the-ground subject matter experts from both nations exchanged best practices regarding flight ops, training, maintenance, and medical operations.

"It really was a well-rounded effort," Anthony said. "It's safe to say we learned a lot from them and they learned a lot from us. Both maintenance and ops benefited from this experience."

Wakea was a perfect illustration of French cooperation with American Armed Forces, showcasing the quality of the existing relationships

Hawaii State Department of Defense

**pupu  
kahi**  
pupukahi "harmoniously united"

as the U.S. continues to accelerate synchronization with allies.

As fighter operations rely on aerial refueling to sustain sortie time, key Hawaii ANG personnel were invited to fly in an A330 Phenix to observe how the FASF execute aerial refueling.

Brig. Gen. Dann S. Carlson, 154th Wing commander and Raptor pilot, hosted a contingent of high ranking FASF officials for a tour of Raptor ops and maintenance - part of a myriad of French interactions with the various U.S. military service components leadership personnel based here in Hawaii.

According to a U.S. Navy news release, Adm. Samuel Paparo,

U.S. Pacific Fleet commander, met with two top French military officials visiting Hawaii to discuss the French military's posture in the region.

"It was definitely an eye-opening experience for everyone involved," Anthony said. "If we're able to continue periodically training with the French, we'll likely look back at this past week as the successful start of it all."







Sgt. 1st Class Elizaldy Pantil, Hawaii National Guard 93rd WMD-CST, assists members of the Kauai Fire and Police departments in the set-up of an antenna array during emergency communication training, Kauai, Hawaii, July 08, 2021. The Hawaii National Guard 93rd WMD-CST conducted joint training with Kauai emergency response agencies including the Kauai Fire Department, Kauai Police Department and Hawaii Department of Health to refine and enforce the Hawaii counties response interoperability in a natural or man-made Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) or Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) incident. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

## Special Hawaii National Guard response unit assists with response training in Kauai

Hawaii State Department of Defense Public Affairs | Story by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson | July 16, 2021

The Hawaii National Guard's 93rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team recently hosted a training engagement with Kauai's first responders. The series of events, held in multiple locations throughout the county, covered a wide spectrum of aspects in disaster response.

"We are here to build a bridge between the local first responder agencies," said Tech. Sgt. Frederick Viloso, Hawaii National Guard, 93rd WMD-CST. "Exercises like this help ensure that they do work together because the scenarios require teamwork."

The Hawaii National Guard guardsmen conducted joint training with the Kauai Fire Department, Kauai Police Department, Wilcox Health Hospital, and the Hawaii Department of Health to refine and enforce the county's response interoperability in a natural or man-made hazardous material scenario.

"One of our main goals is just to put faces to names and make sure they understand our

capabilities," said Lt. Col. Aaron Blanchard, commander Hawaii National Guard, 93rd WMD-CST. "Kauai county planners and operators know who to contact and what we can bring to a disaster response and the type of support that we can offer."

**"One of our main goals is just to put faces to names and make sure they understand our capabilities."**

*said Lt. Col. Aaron Blanchard,*

The events were also supported by Guardsmen from Alaska and California along with scientists from the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command - Chemical Biological Center, and representatives from Hawaii National Guards CERFP team.

The range of topics covered included setting up communications, working in a hazmat environment, mask wear and fit, decontamination, and the emerging issue of fentanyl found at crime scenes.

"There has been an increase over the past few years and the fentanyl coming into the islands is being used in the illicit drug trade," said Blanchard. "However, there are fears at

the Department of Defense level that it could potentially be used as a terrorist weapon."

The events culminated with a joint training field exercise between the Kauai Fire and Police departments with an active shooter drill at Wilcox Hospital and a hasty decontamination event in Hanapepe.

WMD CSTs are special National Guard units spread throughout the nation. They are comprised of over fifty Army and Air National Guardsmen with specialized training, equipment, and certifications. The Guardsmen are on fulltime status and are tasked with being ready to respond if requested by the state or county authorities to natural or human caused disaster in 24 hours. The 93rd WMD CST also regularly provides behind the scenes safety monitoring at large events in Hawaii and in other states upon request and availability.

This exercise took place in early July before the COVID-19 Pandemic reemergence with the Delta variant that required redoubling of masking and social distance efforts. Most of the participants were fully vaccinated at the time of the exercise.





Airman 1st Class Genesaret Balladares, 154th Security Forces Squadron member, leads a team of volunteers during a conservation project event June 8, 2021, on Mount Kaala, Hawaii. Balladares set up a collaboration between her unit and the Army Natural Resource Program, Oahu, during a project to protect native species. The goal of the program is to effectively balance the requirements of the Army's training mission with its natural resource responsibilities. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier)

## Airman shares environmental passion with unit, leads conservation project

154th Wing Public Affairs - Hawaii Air National Guard | Story by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier | Thursday, July 8, 2021

Genesaret was in a bit of a 'rut' the first time she climbed Mount Kaala, the highest point on the island of Oahu. Harsh weather conditions struck the mountain from the East, making it unsafe for her and her friends to scale down the scenic ridge-line on the other side.

Nature, proving to be mysterious and unpredictable as usual, was exactly what she came out to experience and spending extra time at the marshy peak to gather her thoughts was hardly a setback for the crew of teen-aged hiking enthusiasts.

Nearby, Genesaret spotted a group of people pulling heaps of grass from the earth and decided to inquire about their landscaping efforts.

"They were a volunteer group pulling this really invasive grass that flourishes in swampy areas," said Genesaret Balladares, who is now an Airman 1st Class in the 154th Security Forces Squadron. "We're like 'do you guys need help? We actually have some spare time cause we're not going to do this ridge hike.' They said yes and ended up teaching us all about the mountain and why preservation efforts like this are so important."

Of all the tidbits of information Balladares absorbed from the team of environmentalists, Balladares was most taken aback from learning about an unfamiliar-looking pink flower that was blooming all around her, known as a Koli'i. She always knew that the Hawaiian Islands were renowned to be the endangered species capitol of the U.S. but seeing one of these

threatened specimens up close made the matter more personal than ever.

"There was something special about seeing that endemic flower for the first time, watching it blossom, and knowing that it only exists here and how I was possibly the only one in the world who was appreciating it at that exact moment. It made me feel that I needed to protect it and make sure it continues to flourish."

This experience was back in 2014 and it ignited a lifelong passion for conservation which pervaded throughout her academic studies, volunteer work, hobbies and personal mission to give back to the 'Aina,' meaning land in the Hawaiian language.

These passions earned Balladares a reputation of being an earthy sort of person; the type who could talk for hours about tiny insects, gardening and her endless collection of native plant photos.

Six years later, as a member of the Hawaii Air National Guard, Balladares was called upon to serve the State of Hawaii in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. She and dozens of other Airmen from the 154th SFS formed a civil support unit called Task Force Reserve to augment domestic operations throughout Hawaii.

Her lifestyle flipped upside-down overnight, with most of her waking hours working alongside the Air National Guard's most battle-hardened and most frequently deployed outfit of defenders. Being one of the most junior members in the

unit, one of the few females and certainly the smallest in the group, she was determined to establish her role and connect with the team which was to become her second family.

However, it didn't take long for Balladares to learn that her peers were vastly more interested in talking about other things such as the latest superhero flick, rather than her precious plant discoveries. With an ample amount of self-restraint, she managed to redirect her excitement for nature within the social sphere and focused on things that would be much more relatable.

Throughout the calmest and harshest portions of the pandemic, Task Force Reserve continued civil support on a tireless basis and the members who comprised it, invariably, became closer than ever.

Balladares remained in touch with her outer network of environmental professionals throughout her island-based deployment and kept an eye out for opportunities to help the environment. In the Spring of 2021, she received word that the Army Natural Resources Program, Oahu, was seeking help to move several tons of gravel near Mount Kaala. The goal of the program is to effectively balance the requirements of the Army's training mission with its natural resource responsibilities.

Now, a more self-assured member of her

**Continued - on page 13**





Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers from a variety of units within the 103rd Troop Command start the 2 mile run (2MR) event during the Army Combat Fitness Test, Waimanalo, Hawaii, April 2, 2021. The 2MR measures aerobic endurance, which is required for conducting continuous operations and ground movements on foot. The six-event readiness assessment, ACFT, is intended to replace the current three-event Army Physical Fitness Test, which has been around since 1980. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theresa Gualdarama)



Left - Hawaii Army National Guard Soldier, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Peck, a UH-60M Black Hawk Helicopter Pilot with Detachment 1, Golf Company, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment, 103rd Troop Command gets some air while performing the standing power throw (SPT) event during the Army Combat Fitness Test, Waimanalo, Hawaii, April 2, 2021. The SPT measures upper and lower body explosive power, flexibility, and dynamic balance assisting with tasks like a buddy drag, throwing a hand grenade and employing progressive levels of force in man-to-man contact.



Right - Hawaii Army National Guard Soldier, Staff Sgt. Charifel Mateo, a Musician with the 111th Army Band, 103rd Troop Command performs the leg tuck (LTK) event during the Army Combat Fitness Test, Waimanalo, Hawaii, April 2, 2021. The LTK measures upper and lower body explosive power, flexibility, and dynamic balance assisting with tasks like a buddy drag, throwing a hand grenade and employing progressive levels of force in man-to-man contact.





Master Sgt. Joleen Morse and Tech. Sgt. Cory Okimura, 204th Airlift Squadron loadmasters, prepare a C-17 Globemaster III for flight Sept. 4, 2021, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam-Hawaii. A team of aircraft maintenance personnel and aircrew flew to California to conduct astronaut rescue training with partners in Moffett Federal Airfield. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier)

## Astronaut recovery task force more capable after airlift

**exercise** - 154th Wing Public Affairs - Hawaii Air National Guard | Story by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier | Sunday, September 12, 2021

Hawaii and California ANG Airmen are enhancing their ability to recover fallen astronauts after completing a search and rescue training scenario held yet out of Moffett Federal Airfield from Sept 4-12.

The training is part of an ongoing series of contingency exercises held to ensure that splashed down space travelers will receive aid in the event of an unplanned landing, deep into the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans.

The unique mission set entails the rapid dispatch of a Guardian Angel rescue team and survival equipment delivered by C-17 Globemaster III

operators from the 204th Airlift Squadron, based out of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

While primary and secondary scenarios entail the recovery of space capsules from Commercial Crew Providers, the airlift capabilities of the C-17 can deliver aid to sparse destinations of the globe significantly faster than other platforms.

The Globemaster's application as a rescue platform is a recent adaptation by the DoD and is exclusively operated by ANG units in Hawaii and Alaska to backup NASA's Commercial Crew Program. Rescue scenarios are tested several times a year to train a growing roster of qualified personnel and develop tactics, techniques and procedures.

Members of the California ANG's 131st Rescue Squadron teamed up with the 204th AS to plan and execute a 'full mission profile' for this training iteration, culminating in a sequence of all major recovery steps from start to finish.

"We've built a great relationship with the 131st Rescue Squadron, the resident experts in ocean rescue in the Pacific," said Lt. Col. Brittan

Komine, 204th AS director of operations. "They have a lot of experience gained by performing their state mission of contingency ship and open ocean rescues. These Pararescuemen are adept at

operating in dynamic environments and need to be ready to encounter every situation. On the flip side, our community is accustomed to deliberate planning. Our support to a downed astronaut will be very dynamic, and we were able to exercise that here."

Participants dedicated a new academic portion to their rescue curriculum, which incorporated several days of briefings, plans and discussion to prepare responders for all foreseeable outcomes which may occur when astronauts are traveling to space and back to earth.

Key personnel from NASA's Human Space flight contingency programs in Johnson Space Center, Texas, attended to help administer the academics, develop best practices, facilitate

the FMP and report the progress achieved for operations to come.

"When we first started, there was really no training curriculum developed; we had to start from scratch," Lt. Col. Tim Saxton, Detachment 3, 1st Air Force, NASA Liaison, "so over the past two years we've developed a lot of products they can look at to learn about the mission. It's good to see how it's progressing; we've definitely come a long way to arrive at this point and it's great to see how the C-17 aircrew are growing as a community."

The academic process was curated to ensure all attending agencies can operate together as a seamless Personnel Recovery Task Force, using overlapping communication systems and understanding what can be expected in the future.

Members became more familiar with all protocols to relay information to and from the capsule, deconflict aircraft within the airspace, establish command of the scene, harmonize with associated air patrols and coordinate rapid departure plans with the designated Guardian Angel pararescue team.

"During our academic lessons, the 'crawl phase,' we instructed different actions on the objective so that in execution everyone was properly prepared," said Komine. "Additionally, we were also able to sit down with the 130th Rescue Squadron, who operate the C-130J, to receive some advice on On-Scene-Commander operations. The OSC role is a new undertaking for our squadron, but largely important for this mission. You're basically running the show; talking to the astronaut, managing the other assets and relaying back to 'C2' (command and control). It's exciting to take on that responsibility."

In addition to streamlining the proficiencies of the rescue crew, personnel from the 154th Logistics Readiness Squadron are also gaining new career field aptitudes in support of the rescue mission.

Air transportation Airmen provide a mission-critical role in rigging and inspecting several tons of rescue equipment onto the aircraft, ensuring that enough medical supplies, sustenance and rescue craft can sustain the lives of drifting astronauts for multiple days while adrift at sea.

While air transportation guardsmen at JBPH-H are traditionally dedicated to supporting fighter operations at their home station, they are now in the process of becoming qualified for routine airdrop taskings.

"I feel that with this new skill set that we are developing, we're adding more value to our unit and more capabilities which can be applied to this NASA mission and has the potential to be used in all kinds of scenarios," said Tech. Sgt. Dennis Dicatoria, 154th LRS

**Continued - on page 14**





California Army National Guard Soldiers with the 95th Civil Support Team transport a simulated victim of a notional radiological explosion on a stretcher during exercise Sentinel Response 2021 in Concord, Calif., April 16, 2021. Sentinel Response 2021 is a full scale exercise that provides local and state first responders and elements of the California Army and Air National Guard with the opportunity to conduct Urban Search and Rescue Operations in a simulated radioactively contaminated environment. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Orlando Corpuz)

## Back to business for Med-Det 1

154th Wing Public Affairs - Hawaii Air National Guard | Story by Staff Sgt. Orlando Corpuz | Thursday, July 1, 2021

Medical specialists from the 154th Medical Group Detachment 1, took their expertise on the road to participate in a California disaster response exercise April 16-18.

Held in Concord, Calif., primarily on the grounds of a U.S. Navy military installation, exercise Sentinel Response tested the skills of the medical team reacting to a simulated radiological explosion in which mass casualties were sustained.

The three-day exercise stress-tested the coordination efforts between California State, Bay Area County, and National Guard elements responding to scenarios in which a wide array of responses was required. Exercise participants were required to respond to everything from hazmat containment, rescue operations, and medical triage and treatment.

For the 154th Medical Group, Detachment 1, in a year where COVID-19 hampered or shut-down many of the training exercises it would have normally participated in, Sentinel Response represented a 'getting-back-to-business' of sorts to the mission sets and capabilities it had originally been designed for.

"From a training standpoint, the pandemic threw our normal training ops and routines for a loop," said Lt. Col. James Faumuina, 154th Medical Group Detachment 1 commander. "The pandemic didn't allow for many of the didactics and field training events we would

have normally been participating in a normal year. Add to that, many of our Airmen were involved with our state's COVID-19 response efforts. So what you really had was a situation

**"This really was a comprehensive effort by our medical Airmen. Many of our team members were able to stretch out those response muscles in the field, and a segment of our folks were able to finish didactics and retain their certifications."**

*Lt. Col. James Faumuina,  
154th Medical Group Detachment 1 commander.*

where it was challenging to train for our normal mission, and that's what Sentinel Response gave us."

The exercise was executed as parts of the nation were slowly easing back on some of the pandemic mitigation efforts that had become routine for many. Still, COVID-19 was on the minds of exercise planners and participants and strict pandemic guidelines were followed.

"Safety was first and foremost," said Faumuina. "We're not completely out of the pandemic shadow so many of those pandemic mitigation efforts were still followed. Many times our unit was in generally outdoor areas. And for those scenarios which required a little tighter physical response, masks were still the norm."



The navy grounds which the exercise was conducted at, with its large areas and variety and number of structures allowed exercise planners to concoct challenging yet realistic scenarios. Vehicle collision rescue, hazmat threat reaction, confined space rescue, breach and stabilization, decontamination, and medical treatment were some of the challenges first responders faced.

Integration was a priority for the Hawaii Airmen as the exercise's military presence involved counterparts from the California Air National Guard's 144th Medical Detachment 1 and a heavy dose of California Army National Guard soldiers.

"In large and complex dom-ops disaster response, you are going to have a multitude of personnel coming together from a multitude of organizations and jurisdictions and you're going to have to merge that effort very quickly," Faumuina said. "The military effort such our unit and our counterparts from the 144th can come in and supplement that civilian response, either with a plus-up in effort or to contribute our capabilities that may not necessarily be available to incident command."

According to Faumuina, integration or lack-there-of can make or break disaster response.

"That complexity is going to require an organized and coordinated effort," Faumuina said. "You'll see civilian incident command coordinating the efforts of county, state, and federal response outfits all coming together. Integration will be key, and I'm not just talking integration amongst the military element, we're talking integration up and down the chain of response. That integration is not easy and that's why exercises such as these are important."

While the main body of Det 1 was training in California, an eight hour drive away, a team of Hawaii ANG medical experts were completing annual required certification and training in Nevada.

"This really was a comprehensive effort by our medical Airmen," Faumuina said. "Many of our team members were able to stretch out those response muscles in the field, and a segment of our folks were able to finish didactics and retain their certifications."

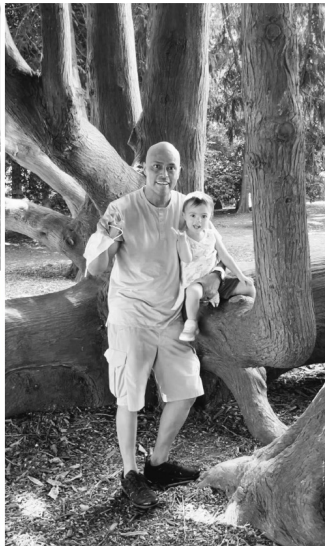




Michele Hanson, a Registered Nurse, explains the plasma donation process to Hawaii Army National Guard (HIARNG) Soldier Capt. Thomas Moriyasu, Executive Officer with the 117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment during an organized blood drive, Honolulu, Hawaii, June 12, 2021. HIARNG Recruiting and Retention Battalion (RRB) teamed with the Blood Bank of Hawaii and the Hawaii Building and Construction Trades Council to conduct their first of many collaboration efforts scheduled throughout the summer to combat the blood storage deficiency in Hawaii. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theresa Gualdarama)







## HIANG 'Ohana: #WeGuardGabe

The Hawaii Air National Guard is no stranger to producing individuals with extraordinary drive and determination. We know that's the case with former Staff Sgt. Gabriel Kealoha, whose service in the HIANG 'Ohana began in 2008 with the 297th Air Traffic Control Squadron. In 2017 he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and left service in February of 2020, when his cancer was considered terminal. By March, doctors told him that he might only have three months left.

Sixteen months later, Gabe is still fighting. Currently receiving a trial treatment in Seattle, Kealoha hopes that his prayers have been answered.

"At the very least, it's extended my terminal diagnosis," said Kealoha. "At best, it's a cure."

Since leaving the HIANG to seek treatment, Kealoha, a dedicated ninth grade teacher at Aiea High School continued to teach from his hospital bed. He, his wife Shannon, and countless family members and friends have worked tirelessly to sign up almost 7,000 people to be tested for bone marrow or plasma donation. Given Kealoha's Native Hawaiian background it's especially important to widen the pool of potential matches. The sentiment was echoed by Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson earlier this year, who shared Kealoha's story after it was featured by Casey Lund on Hawaii News Now.

"Less than 1% of the registry are Pacific Islanders," said Shannon Kealoha. "If people don't step up to save their own, then who will? We need more Hawaiians saving Hawaiians."

Shannon, who also serves in the HIANG as a paralegal with the 154th Wing's Staff Judge Advocate, is currently teleworking from Seattle while caring for her husband and their 17-month-old daughter Lily. She hopes to be home in Hawaii for the holidays if everything continues to go well.

On Tuesday, August 10, 2021, Shannon was elated to announce that Gabe's most recent test results showed that he was cancer free; the marrow transplant is, so far, a success. "The study he is in shows we have at least 3 more years, if not longer," she said, provided that the cancer does not return.

While Gabe and Shannon celebrate the good news, we ask the HIANG 'Ohana to keep them in your thoughts.

If you are interested in becoming a bone marrow or plasma donor, please visit [www.KokuaGabe.com](http://www.KokuaGabe.com) or check out Be the Match Hawaii. If you are Native Hawaiian or of Pacific Islander heritage, please pass along Gabe and Shannon's message to increase the odds of being able to save people like Gabe.



## Hawaii Army National Guard Recruiting Office assists with granting a wish

State of Hawaii, Department of Defense, Public Affairs Office | Story by Bernhard Lashleyleidner

Maui, Hawaii – The Hawaii Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion assisted the Hawaii Make-A-Wish organization with a scavenger hunt for a special person around the Island of Maui, July 5, 2021.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Rodarte, a recruiter with the HIARNG said the scavenger hunt was a small part of the wish that Lyla had. Lyla's wish is to become an honorary Navy Seal for the day.

"We did a meet and greet with Lyla and her family and gave her an HIARNG tactical backpack, stuffed with T-shirt, hat, stickers, pen/notebook, key chain, an operational camouflage cover and a cup," Rodarte said.

Rodarte also mentioned how they showed her some of the HIARNG's military vehicles in the motor pool as well as the helicopter landing zone, before handing her the next clue of the scavenger hunt.

"Anytime we can be a part of something like this, it is a blessing," Rodarte said. "It meant the world to me that we were able to put a smile on her face in the short time she was with us."

At the final location Lyla, was given her final clue, revealing that her wish was going to come true.

Kari Bogner, Director of Mission Delivery, Hawaii Make-A-Wish said that Lyla was very happy and appreciable spending the day with the National Guard Soldiers in Maui.

"Lyla thought this was her wish," said Bogner. "Wait until she sees what we have planned for her on Oahu, she's going to be blown away."

To read more about Lyla's wish, click the link <https://mauinow.com/2021/07/26/a-maui-girls-wish-to-be-a-navy-seal-was-brought-to-life-by-trident-adventures/>

The Hawaii Make-A-Wish foundation is a nonprofit organization that, grants wishes to children aged six months to 19 years old, battling a life-threatening medical condition.

"The Hawaii chapter is one of the busiest chapters in the nation," said Bogner. "We usually grant about 1400 wishes locally, but due to the pandemic we have only granted about 45 wishes this year."

Hawaii State Department of Defense

**pupu  
kahi**  
pupukahi "harmoniously united"





organization, Balladares said she saw this as a perfect opportunity to solicit the muscle from her security forces family to a cause that would aid the wildlife on a mountain that was sacred to her. The prospect of briefing her unit about the initiative was an unsettling idea, knowing that it might not be well received. But after seeking out and receiving command support, it was clear that at least a few members would step up to volunteer.

"I was thinking that nobody would be interested," she said. "They don't understand why I'm so passionate about it. I lost sleep over this and was worried that people would think to themselves 'oh my gosh, this girl is crazy, she's talking about her plant stuff again.'"

With all eyes on her during her initial briefing, Balladares' pitch didn't go as she had anticipated. It was an overwhelming success with 90 percent of Airmen committing to the volunteer project.

"It was clear that she was very emotional about this project and it showed us how much passion she has for this," said Capt. Allison Delos Santos, 154th SFS operations officer. "It's something that she feels strongly about; all the way down to sharing the scientific names of the plants and animals, their Hawaiian names, their features, and what they looked like. So, we could all see how much time and effort she has put into making sure this is successful and she made us want to be a part of it."

Weeks later, after much planning and coordination between all parties, Balladares and her contingent of nearly 30 volunteers

gathered outside of Schofield Barracks on June 8, to synchronize with ANRP personnel. The team huddled to receive a comprehensive briefing from program managers, learning about how their efforts will be helping biologists to preserve natural habitats of at-risk species and how they can do so while respecting environmental sensitivities.

Not only was the volunteer force the largest group to ever contribute to the ANRP, but Kim Welch, ANRP outreach and volunteer specialist also said they were able to complete enough labor that would account for five to six separate outings.

On perhaps, a more surprising note, Balladares said she was overjoyed to see how everyone was actively engaged with the initiative and asking nonstop questions about the native and invasive wildlife.

While being outspoken about her passions once seemed to be an elusive barrier between Balladares and her peers, volunteers were so excited that they lined up just to have their turn at viewing some of the critters and fauna which she illuminated.

"Looking back," said Balladares, "I couldn't be happier with how the day turned out. To have their support and permission to lead them; it's been very empowering. Whatever insecurities I had with the group before going up the mountain, they all went away. I'm just glad everyone had a great time, worked hard and ended up making a difference"



## Lava Brigade Soldiers assist Geronimo with pre-deployment training

State of Hawaii, Department of Defense, Public Affairs Office | Story by Bernhard Lashleyleidner

Fort Polk, Louisiana – Approximately 127 Soldiers with the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Hawaii Army National Guard assisted the 7th Special Forces Group with pre-deployment opposing force (OPFOR) training Jul 9 through Aug 3, 2021, at the Joint Readiness Training Center.

The brigade was tasked with supplying Soldiers to represent the enemy force/OPFOR to replicate many of the unique situations a unit may face to include host national officials and citizens, insurgents/terrorists, news media, and non-governmental organizations while deployed.

OPFOR training is intended to provide commanders with a realistic training environment within the operational training field. The importance of OPFOR scenario-based training is intended to meet unit training objectives and affect desired leader development. Bottom line, to prepare units for a fight.

The 29th IBCT contributed Soldiers from three different locations: Hawaii, Guam and Arizona to augment the Polk-based 509th Infantry Regiment. Their mission was to provide a full range of relevant and realistic simulations for Charlie Company, 19th Special Forces Group, during the five-week OPFOR exercise.

"It was a little challenging getting equipment and personnel from three different locations to the JRTC, due to all the COVID protocols," said Capt. Kevin Tam, Commander with Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 299th Cavalry, 29th IBCT, Hawaii Army National Guard.

Tam said this type of training uses real-world scenarios to test a unit's

tactical readiness procedures.

"This was a unique opportunity for the Soldiers who attended this OPFOR exercise," said Tam. "Most of the Soldiers on this mission were young specialists and sergeants and having them train alongside a Special Forces unit was priceless."

The brigade's personnel had an opportunity to observe 7th SFG Soldiers utilizing teamwork, tactics and techniques, and then trained on how to use them prior to the start of the combat rotation exercise.

"While training with the SF unit, we learned how to identify different threats behaviors, equipment and small unit tactics," said 2nd Lt. Abrahamson Takeshi, Platoon Leader, Charlie Company, 1st 294th Infantry Regiment, 29th IBCT, HIARNG. "Their teamwork and cohesion make them dangerous to opposing forces."

Being tasked as an OPFOR for a rotational units pre-deployment is a great way to learn new skills and assist a deploying unit with honing their tactics, communications and techniques.

"This experience has motivated me to be a better Soldier and leader," said Cpl. Koa Pagapa, assistant team leader, Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 299th Cavalry, 29th IBCT, HIARNG. "I've gained valuable skills I can share with the unit."

He also said being able to participate in OPFOR training exercise was an eye-opener and great opportunity that he will value forever.





Master Sgt. Joleen Morse, 204th Airlift Squadron loadmaster, prepares to airdrop a rescue craft from a C-17 Globemaster III Sept. 9, 2021, over Santa Cruz Drop Zone, Calif. A Hawaii Air National Guard aircrew flew to California to validate their ability to train alongside Guardian Angel pararescue jumpers from the 131st Rescue Squadron. The combined participants form a Personnel Recovery Task Force that can aid splashed down astronauts far into the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier)

air transportation NCO in charge. “This gives us the means to become self-sustainable, rather than relying on the availability of external agencies every time.”

Airmen from California and Hawaii topped off their week of subject matter expert exchanges with a set of back-to-back FMP scenarios, entailing a staged astronaut crew adrift in Santa Cruz Drop Zone, postured to be retrieved by the fully-loaded C-17 package with Guardian Angel members.

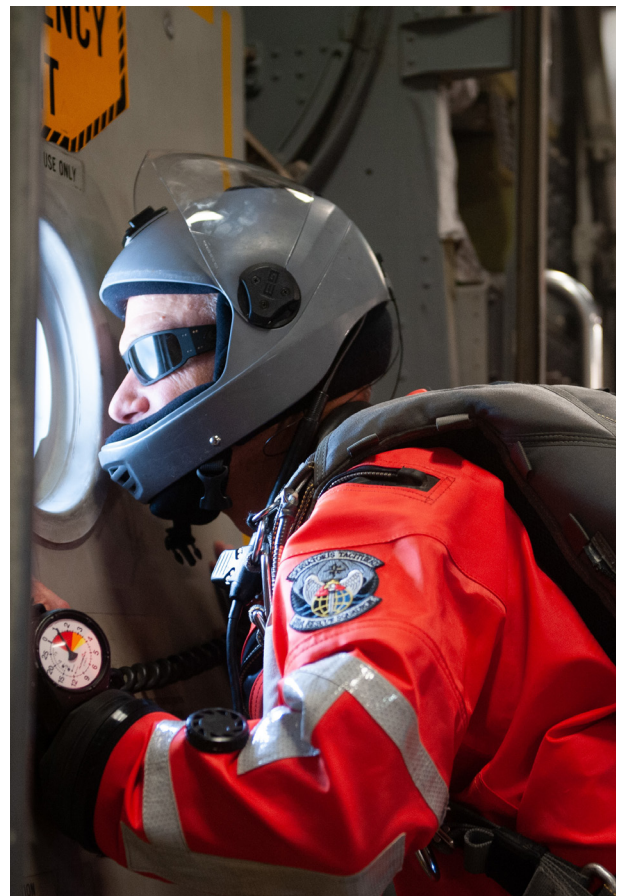
The week of training was geared toward validating overall rescue competencies for a national level tasking. Exercise planners made the most out of each flying opportunity to check off annual training requirements for participating members, making for a cost-effective operation.

In alignment with reducing training costs, the Hawaii aircrew used their closer proximity to mainland units to support additional training

airdrops with U.S. Navy SEALs and pararescuemen in Southern California several days before the FMP.

Since the CCP resumed human space flights on U.S. soil in May 2020, aircrew from 204th Airlift Squadron have stood on alert as astronauts made their way to and from the International Space Station, with plans to continue their role for years to come.

After concluding a week's worth of irreplaceable training, the Airmen exchanged parting gifts to reaffirm their growing partnership and share elements of their culture. Airmen from Hawaii presented the Guardian Angel team a Leiomano (a shark-toothed club that was used by Hawaiian warriors) inscribed with graphics that represent the two units and words that emphasize their unity as one ‘Ohana



A Guardian Angel pararescue jumper from the 131st Rescue Squadron looks out the window of a C-17 Globemaster III Sept. 9, 2021, near Santa Cruz Drop Zone, Calif. The aircraft is operated by members of the Hawaii Air National Guard's 204th Airlift Squadron, who conduct routine rescue operations with Guardian Angels as part of their mission to provide contingency rescue operations for splashed-down astronauts. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. John Linzmeier)

(family in the Hawaiian language).

This shared mission with Guardian Angel pararescue jumpers, the pararescue motto proves to encapsulate the entire purpose of their common training – ‘That Others May Live.’







Col. Pamela Ellison, Hawaii Army National Guard, interacts with her Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) counterpart for the operational design workshop portion of Exercise GEMA BHAKTI, Sept. 16, 2021, Jakarta Indonesia. The operational design workshop in the precursor exercise for Exercise GEMA BHAKTI and is facilitated by the Hawaii National Guard with the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) as a part of the State Partnership Program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

once agreed upon this will trigger Exercise GEMA BHAKTI.

"Operational design takes complex situations and breaks them down in easy, manageable steps in the military planning process," said Lt. Col. Brandon Torres, Hawaii Army National Guard military intelligence officer. "This is important because in our current operation environment, things are not as simple as they used to be. It is imperative that this step is done right. We need to be able to think through the wicked problems and get to a solution for those problems. This process helps us to define what the true nature of the problem is so we can plan a response."

A secondary goal of the operational design workshop is the establishing of relationships between the Hawaii National Guardsmen and their Indonesian counterparts. During the four day exercise the full spectrum of team building are experienced, from storming to conforming. The added COVID-19 protocols had little diminishing effect on the overall exercise. The Hawaii National Guard brought a diverse team for this year's workshop to help foster a deeper level of discussions and exposure for the staff. A hallmark of this type of military engagement is professionally spirited conversations as each member shares from their knowledge, experience and opinions on the different aspects of the scenario and they work as a team to come to a common understanding.

As the teams worked through the operational design process to frame the problem, their relationships began to mesh, and new facets of the scenario came to light. Throughout each day the entire group would pause, and each team would present their products - further shedding light on different variables and possible ways forward.

"I have learned a lot during this staff exercise," said Maj. Raja Sitanggang, Tentara Nasional Indonesia staff officer. "As a peace keeping officer, I help guide the planning process as we transition from peace enforcement to peace keeping inside this year's exercise scenario. This exercise requires us to think critically and creatively because there is no easy established answer. The Hawaii National Guard is very professional and selected diverse officers to represent them in this program. It is impressive."

While the COVID protocols; mandatory mask wear, temperature checks, and periodic

room sanitation, had little effect on the actual execution of the workshop, getting the military staffs in one room for the first time in 18 months required many more steps than usual. Every member of the U.S. delegation was required to be fully vaccinated and were tested multiple times before leaving for Indonesia. They adhered to the required 7-day quarantine and were tested an additional 2 times before the workshop could be started. The TNI members were also quarantined before the start of the exercise.



Maj. Gregory Scott, Hawaii Air National Guard, interacts with his counterpart for the operational design workshop portion of Exercise GEMA BHAKTI, Sept. 16, 2021, Jakarta Indonesia. The operational design workshop in the precursor exercise for Exercise GEMA BHAKTI and is facilitated by the Hawaii National Guard with the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) as a part of the State Partnership Program. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)





The G6 Cyber team composed of service members from the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), Hawaii Army National Guard, Hawaii Air National Guard and the U.S. Army conduct mission analysis for the Joint Exercise GEMA BHAKTI scenario, September 22, 2021, Jakarta Indonesia. GB21 is a Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) staff exercise (STAFFEX) between USINDOPACOM (and components) and TNI (and components), and is designed to improve joint, operational-level staff planning and processes. It also promotes positive military relations, assuring security and stability in the region, increases cultural awareness, and enhances command and control proficiency. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

## Hawaii National Guard State Partnership Program partner Indonesia join in Exercise

**GEMA BHAKTI** - State of Hawaii, Department of Defense, Public Affairs Office | Story by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson | Monday, September 20, 2021

The armed forces of Indonesia and the United States held Joint Exercise GEMA BHAKTI 21 (GB21) a Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) staff exercise, between U.S. Indo Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) in Jakarta, Indonesia from 21-28 September 2021. The eight-day exercise was designed to improve joint operational-level staff planning and processes during crisis response. It also promoted positive military relations, increased cultural awareness, and enhanced command and control proficiency while assuring security and stability in the region.

"In the past nine years, Exercise GEMA BHAKTI has evolved and increased in complexity. The first year involved just a tabletop discussion focused mostly on future exercise design," said Brig. Gen. Stephen F. Logan, Hawaii National Guard Deputy Adjutant General. "GEMA BHAKTI now incorporates a staff exercise with multiple scenarios."

This was the ninth iteration of

GEMA BHAKTI, Indonesian for "Echo of Good Deeds." USINDOPACOM and the TNI conducted planning for a scenario involving forces from the U.S. military (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines and their TNI counterparts), as well as actors from the civilian and humanitarian communities, such as U.N. World Food Program, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, and the Red Cross.

Approximately 40 USINDOPACOM and U.S. Inter-Agency personnel, 30 TNI personnel, and additional representatives from non-military organizations took part. About 20 Hawaii National Guardsmen supported this iteration of GB21 and also collaborated with the TNI on the precursor operational design workshop that concluded on September 20, 2021.

"We are here to learn from

the TNI and to share from our experiences," said Lt. Col. David Hosea, Hawaii National Guard military planner. "They [the TNI] have more experience in planning

**"GEMA BHAKTI allows us to train with our partners in the Indo-Pacific region. We have strengthened our connection so if we need to work together in an exercise or in real-world operations we will be more than capable."**

*Col. Tracey Omori, Hawaii Army National Guard - Exercise GB21 Commander.*

and participating in peacekeeping operations, and I am excited to learn from them. Building this relationship, sharing experiences, and training alongside our partners, helps maintain security and stability in the Pacific."

The exercise had many phases starting with a day of academics and lecture then transitioned to the staff-ex portion where the joint staff shops from G-1 (personnel)

to G-6 (cyber) and special staff received the operational approach brief prepared in the previous exercise with the TNI and Hawaii National Guard (HING). The joint teams comprised of members from the TNI, US Army, US Navy, US Marines, and the HING analyzed the situation. The problem was dissected by each staff section where challenges, needs and capabilities are identified and then each of the findings were entered on a slide, then briefed to the commander. The goal was always to move from the "current state" to the "desired state." In this case, moving from peace enforcement to peace keeping operations. The process that was followed is enshrined in the Military Decision-Making Process – Multinational. The atmosphere was always one of a learning environment.

"In this exercise I have been out front quite a bit," said 1st Lt. Crystal Woods, Hawaii Army National Guard. "As a junior officer to gain this experience and have this exposure will help set a strong foundation as I move through my career."





Sgt. First Class Paul Buo, US Army, 5th Security Force Assistance Brigade, reviews the exercise map with his Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) counterparts during the mission analysis portion of Joint Exercise GEMA BHAKTI (GB21) September 21, 2021, Jakarta Indonesia. GB21 is a Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) staff exercise (STAFFEX) between USINDOPACOM (and components) and TNI (and components), and is designed to improve joint, operational-level staff planning and processes. It also promotes positive military relations, assuring security and stability in the region, increases cultural awareness, and enhances command and control proficiency. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)

A wide variety of topics were addressed during the planning process in-order solve an ever-evolving set of issues in the complex scenario. The multinational team, that by day two, was functioning as a joint staff, grew in military knowledge and wisdom no matter their level of experience.

“As the maritime SME (subject matter expert) and Pacific Fleet representative I read up on the National Guard and the TNI,” said Lt. Cmdr. Myrian Smith, US Navy. “I also reviewed the Multi-National Force Standard Operation Procedure to insure we had a common language.”

The Hawaii National Guard-led exercise emphasized small group discussions facilitated by subject matter experts from the TNI and US forces. Each shared from their experiences and their lessons learned. Sometimes it seemed difficult to arrive with a way forward due to the different perspectives, but this was part of the process to keep a strong personality in the staff from injecting a short-sighted perspective and error-ed thinking. Through the process of discussion, presentation, “azimuth checks,” and redressing deficiencies, the relationships are built and courses of action are developed.

“We [the TNI] have our own way of conducting operations and

the US has their way,” said Maj. Arya Justisia Sani, TNI medical officer. “In this exercise we get to know how we conduct operation verses how they [the US Military] conduct operations, but if there is a contingency we can operate in the same way. This exercise is very helpful to establish a common operating procedure.”

The days were long in GB21 officially starting at 0745 and working in the groups through MDMP-M until well after 1700 with only one organized break for lunch where teams ate the regional delicacies. Many of the participants retreated to their rooms after each day’s assessments to read further on the scenario and researched how similar historical scenarios were addressed.

“For the past eighteen months before this exercise we’ve had multiple MDMP engagements with the TNI,” said Capt. Curtis Trauthwein - US Army. “This exercise helps both countries prepare for interoperability

and planning for contingency operations. It is good to test and practice our interoperability.”

The COVID-19 pandemic was an additional presence throughout GB12. Strict protection and testing protocols were followed every day; mask wear, temperature checks, hand sanitation and hourly room sanitation. Fortunately, these mitigations had little effect on the productive outcome of GB21. The only true loss was some of the traditional cultural exchange activities which normally occur. However, the participants found other ways to experience each other’s culture during the planning exercise.

“What I am going to take way form GB21 are the relationships the HING and TNI,” said Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Dao - US Marines. “They are some of the most outstanding and professional individuals and have the work ethic to meet all mission objectives. I will never forget this; they are great people.”

GEMA BHAKTI acts as a culmination of events for the HING and the TNI, who are linked through the State Partnership Program (SPP). For instance, in 2019 the HING SPP and TNI had 22 separate engagements that lead to GB19.

This only the second face to face engagement since late 2019, with GB20 being entirely virtual due to the pandemic. This did not diminish the caliber of the exercise or quality of the exchanges.

“I learned a lot from my US counterparts,” said Maj. Adityo Suryo Nug - Tentara Nasional Indonesia. “We have different capabilities. We have different doctrines. We have different considerations. We learn from each other and strengthen each other in our cooperation in the hope that in the future if we have to work together, we will be able to.”

There were many new faces on all sides of GB21 and a few old hands, but there where lessons to be learned and experiences to be had for everyone. This year’s GEMA BHAKTI was a hopeful return to normal while looking forward to the changes on the horizon.

“GEMA BHAKTI allows us to train with our partners in the Indo-Pacific region,” said Col. Tracey Omori, Hawaii Army National Guard - Exercise GB21 Commander. “We have strengthened our connection so if we need to work together in an exercise or in real-world operations we will be more than capable.”



Lt. Cmdr. Myrian Smith, US Navy, listens to the initial mission brief on the third day of Joint Exercise GEMA BHAKTI, September 23, 2021, Jakarta Indonesia. GB21 is a Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) staff exercise (STAFFEX) between USINDOPACOM (and components) and TNI (and components), and is designed to improve joint, operational-level staff planning and processes. It also promotes positive military relations, assuring security and stability in the region, increases cultural awareness, and enhances command and control proficiency. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Andrew Jackson)